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EDITORIAL NOTES.

GEORGE HERBERT LOCKE.

*THE STUDY OF THE
CLASSICS IN
RELATION TO
MODERN LIFE*

THERE are those who tell us in language sometimes painfully modern that the study of Latin, while at one time justifiable, is now no longer so. They enter a plea for modern languages and modern history, and urge as one of the arguments that the life of ancient times is so far removed in thought and practice from that of today that in the study of it there is but little interest and less value. Such persons picture the classics as appearing before the world, "not, as once, candidate and crowned, but in a garb, an attitude of humility, almost of supplication." The picture is not true to life, but the mere suggestion that such an image might be formed in the brain of an opponent has stirred up the teachers of the classics to devise ways and means of quickening the spirit and renewing the methods of classical education, and of removing from it a dead weight of indolent tradition. One of the most hopeful signs of this awakening among the classical teachers is the increasing interest that is being shown in the content of the literature and in the better teaching of the history known to us in secondary schools as "ancient." Of all the kinds of history taught in our secondary schools none lends itself so readily to teaching as this particular division, and perhaps none is so poorly taught. The possibilities are marvelous, but the poor utilization of these possibilities, even by the teacher of the classics, is a partial explanation of the severe criticisms directed against the retention of the classics in our schools. It is no longer possible to defend a subject on "general principles." That was well enough in an age when people accepted the opinions of college professors as authoritative, but today, in this practical age, we must not only have faith in what we are teaching sufficient to say that we believe that this is an excellent subject, and that it has had a long and honorable history; but we must be prepared to give an adequate reason for the faith that is in us. The strengthening of this faith and of the reasons that will appeal to persons of today will be found in the better knowledge of the history of these ancient nations, and the comparison of that life with modern life. The center of interest with our secondary-school pupils is the life of today, but the significance of that life is in no way as well developed as by the comparison of ancient methods with those at present in use. If we teach only modern history we get a perverted idea of what has been done, we get an atmosphere, but no perspective.

As an illustration of the nearness in thought and practice of ancient times with those of today one might well consider the holding of elections in Rome and her colonies. Recent excavations in Pompeii have disclosed the steel walls

with election cards upon them relating to the municipal election in 79 A. D. in that city. The offices to be filled in that year were those of the *Ædileship* and the *Duumvirate*. All burgesses had a vote in electing these for magistrates, and the interest which was taken in the election is shown by the fact that perhaps one in three or four of the electors thought it worth while to write up on his house-wall or in some public place his views as to the merits of the candidates. The voter wished to show where he stood, and hoped by the display of his colors to attract others to the candidate. We do much the same in our elections when we display in the windows of our homes pictures of the candidate to whom we are giving support, or join in a petition in his favor which is placarded in some prominent place. The person seeking municipal honors in Pompeii had to be at least twenty-five years old and had to prove that he possessed a fortune of about \$4,000. This was a fairly large sum of money in those days and in that city, so that the candidates were generally of the richer class. The voting public must have had some of the characteristics of modern times, for we read that laws were passed forbidding any candidate to spend money in treating, in amusements, or in any kind of "donations" for the space of two years prior to his candidacy. However, he managed to evade the law in much the same way as his successor does today, and in truly modern style he promised that large public works would be started if he were elected to office, so that every man would have work and some men would have contracts. The other popular plank in his platform was the increase in the number of public festivals and amusements. It is interesting to notice that these municipal offices, like ours of today, had no salaries attached, and the same mad rush of persons to "serve the people" characterized life then as today.

Again, in those days there were clubs and unions, societies and guilds, the clubs of ball players who wanted many public games and better ball grounds; there were the "late drinkers" and the "long sleepers" (*universi dormientes*) who were not in favor of early closing; there were the little thieves (*jurunculi*) who favored the reduction of the police force and the cutting down of the appropriation for street-lighting. The saloons seem to have been as enterprising as in modern times, for over the door of one may still be seen the inscription: "Here you can have a drink for one *as*; anyone who likes to pay more can have a better draft," which reminds one of the equally alluring invitation seen over the doors of saloons in many of our cities: "The largest glass of beer in the city—for a nickel."

The supporters of some of the candidates believed in the advertising qualities of poetry, much as do our breakfast-food candidates today, and so we find a certain Lucretius Fronto immortalized on the walls of a house in these words:

Si pudor in vita quicquam prodesse putatur
Lucretius hic Fronto dignus honore bene est;

which, roughly translated, is: "If you want a really decent man to represent you, vote for Fronto."

The poetry was not always of a high class, and many of the feet limped sadly, but what can one expect of campaign poetry! One Felix was a candidate for

office, and the solicitation to vote for him ran thus: "A Vettium Caprasium Felicem Aedilem Balbe rogamus;" which Dr. Lanciani calls "a centipede rather than a hexameter." Some other of the cards of advice are interesting and suggest modern methods: "Proculus, vote for Sabinus and he will vote for you;" "Vote for Publius V. B." (*virum bonum*); "Gavius is a man serviceable to public interests. Do elect him, I beg of you."

The interests of the state were a prime consideration, and we are sure President Roosevelt would agree with the law that provided in case of a tie that the "family man" must always be preferred to the bachelor. If, however, both candidates were married and the vote was a tie, he with children won; if both had children, the one with the largest family won.

The elections seem to have been carried on in good feeling, and there are few records of offensive scribbling. A certain Quintius must have had a loyal and enthusiastic supporter who wrote on his house-wall

Quintium si quis recusat
Assidet ad asinum.

Much stronger language than this is used in our campaigns.

This illustration we have used to point out the possibilities in the classics and in ancient history, which is a part of the classics, for relating the life of ancient times with that of today, and thus helping to strengthen the belief that so many of us have that there is an educational value in the study of the language, literature, and history of these great peoples which will be of definite social value to the youth of today. The resources are there, but they must be developed in an intelligent manner by teachers who are in touch with the social life in which they are living.

THERE is a popular fallacy abroad in men's minds that success in college bears but little relation to success in life. By success in college we mean prominence in intellectual pursuits, rather than on the playing field; by success in life we mean leadership and good citizenship, rather than the mere amassing of wealth. It seems as if with the loosening up of our curriculum there has come a looseness in method and an increase in helps and props, until college is a preparation for life only in a bald and mechanical sense. The preparation that is necessary for success is not so much the amassing of knowledge as the clear understanding of the principles of attack—the ability to use one's knowledge quickly, accurately, and economically. College life is not so very different from business life, and the qualities that make for success in the one may very likely be those that will ensure success in the other. A very interesting side-light on this is afforded in an article in which is given a list of the first ten men of each of the classes that graduated from Harvard College from 1850 to 1860. In the class of 1850, James C. Carter, one of the most prominent jurists of New York, stood fourth, and Joseph H. Thayer, the eminent scholar in New Testament Greek, was third. It was a class of sixty-five members. In the class of 1851 the second scholar was W. W.

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Goodwin, one of the most distinguished students and teachers of Greek of the last fifty years. Joseph H. Choate, ambassador to the court of St. James, was the fourth scholar of the class of 1852. President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard stood second in the class of 1853. Of the eighty-one members of 1854 perhaps the most distinguished was Horace H. Furness, the great Shakespearean editor. In the class of 1855 the scholars standing first were Francis C. Barlow, of the New York bar, and Robert Treat Paine, of Boston. The eighth scholar was F. B. Sanborn, and it is interesting to notice that the fourteenth in the class of eighty-one members was Phillips Brooks. The class of 1856 had ninety members, among whom were the late Professor Greenough, Searle, the astronomer, and Robinson, governor of Massachusetts. The fourth scholar of the class of 1857 was John D. Long, secretary of the navy and governor of Massachusetts. Wentworth and Cilley, two famous teachers of Phillips Exeter, and Hartwell, of the Supreme Court, were of 1858; while in 1859 the third scholar was William Everett, member of Congress and principal of Adams Academy. Alexander McKenzie, the minister of the Shepard Memorial Church in Cambridge, was also of this class. Of the whole number of one hundred, two were members of cabinets, five were congressmen, two governors of states, and one ambassador. It may be said that statistics and records such as this prove but little; at any rate, they are an agreeable antidote to the prevailing tendency in some quarters to minify the connection between brilliancy in college and success in life.